

TRULINCS 69032066 - WASHINGTON, ASKIA - Unit: PHL-E-S

FROM: Jones, Tasha
 TO: 69032066
 SUBJECT: Revised letter to Judge
 DATE: 04/27/2016 03:06:17 PM

Monday, April 25, 2016

Dear Honorable Judge Slomsky,

I hope this letter find you in excellent health. I am writing to you on the behalf of my brother, Askia Washington. I love Askia and want him to succeed in life. Our family upbringing hasn't set the best example for him. To understand some of the poor choices that he may have made, please understand our background first. Askia lost his father very early in life. I believe Askia was about one year old when his father was murdered. My mother and father were married shortly before I was born but separated when I was six years old and Askia was 8 years old. The separation was extremely hard on my family as my father was the only man that was present in Askia's life. When my mother and father separated, my father retained custody of my younger brother and I. During this period, I have been told that my mother had fallen on extremely hard times (she lost her job and our family home was foreclosed). I returned to live with my mother and siblings when I was 10 years old. By this time, I was able to see a small glimpse of the substance abuse issues. It wasn't until I was 11 years old and Askia was 13 years old that my mother had substance abuse issues which had spiraled out of control and began to directly impact our daily living and necessities. By this time, our older sister had left home to live with other family members because she did not want to live in that environment. We were children attending school regularly. I will never forget this day. Askia, my younger brother, and I had arrived home from school to see our mother crying in the living room. We asked her what was wrong and she told us that she had just picked up her monthly rations of food stamps and public assistance money when she was robbed of all of the food stamps and money. Askia, being the eldest of us and more privy to substance abuse immediately responded by saying, "You didn't get robbed. You sold it for drugs". He stormed out of the house upset. He later returned that evening with a book of food stamps and told me to hide them. I hid them inside of my dictionary. He told me, "I'm never letting us starve again. I promise. I will take care of y'all". I didn't quite understand what he had meant by that at the time because I was so young but as time progress, my understanding had grown. My brother was willing to sacrifice his innocence to ensure that my younger brother and I were safe and fed. I love him for that so much. With our upbringing, we all could have fell victim to the streets. He allowed me to thrive and to pursue my education. We still struggled and eventually my father had stepped in and moved my younger brother and I with him into my aunt's tiny apartment. Askia was truly alone then. My mother's relationship was already strained with my eldest sister and then Askia. We made it through our teen years together due to our sibling bond and the help of extended relatives. Entering into adulthood was the strangest time for me. No one had taught me or prepared me for adulthood. My sister had tried but she was only a sibling. It struck me. Who had prepared Askia to take care of himself? Who have prepared him how to be a productive member within society? I feel like I owe him a chance to turn his life around. I owe him an opportunity that he had once afforded me to thrive when I was younger. Askia has never had the opportunity to be a child. He felt fully responsible for ensuring that his younger siblings were shielded from the stresses of life. He lived with that burden all of these years. Even now as an adult, without a formal education, he feels the need to take care of his family. It is now my turn to protect Askia. I have had many talks with my brother in helping him understand himself and his role within society as well as the role that he play within my children's lives and his son's life. Askia needs encouragement and support to be a better person which we have been providing to him during this entire ordeal. Askia has a bright future and is supported by his family. Prior to his arrest, Askia was working hard even though his hand injury forced him to resign from his original job as a laborer. Askia has worked diligently as a bedbug exterminator. He was and still is driven to own a successful pest extermination company. We would like operate a family business where Askia could take pride in himself as well as others. It is something that he can take pride in as he is building the company from the ground up. For a long time, Askia has been lost. It took some time for him to figure out what he should be doing to sustain a better life for himself but I believe with the support of his family, he will be able to support himself in a safe, healthy, legal, and productive manner. Please help us heal as a family. We want nothing but the best for Askia and will ensure that he continues to thrive on a crimeless path to success.

Respectfully,

Natasha Jones

October 28, 2015

To whom it may concern,

When I think of my Uncle Askia, I think fun. He always makes us laugh and he brings a lot of light into a room. He's a really silly guy. He was always there for us whenever we needed him. It's almost impossible to be upset around my uncle. Not having him around for so long has been really tough. There's been a bunch of family issues I feel he could have made better. He was around a lot when he was home. My uncle kind of treated me and my sisters and my brother the same as if we were his kids. I can't say I remember ever having a bad day when my uncle was around. If there was ever a time we needed help with getting things that we needed, he would never hesitate to help. Like I said before, he took care of us too. I really miss having my uncle around. I could use his positivity and silliness right now. My daughter met him once already but I know when he comes home, she's going to love him just like we do. He taught us things and made sure we stayed on track with important things like school and taking care of each other. Even now, he still calls and checks up on us. All I can say now is that we're all just waiting on him to come home.

— Kiyanna N. McClain